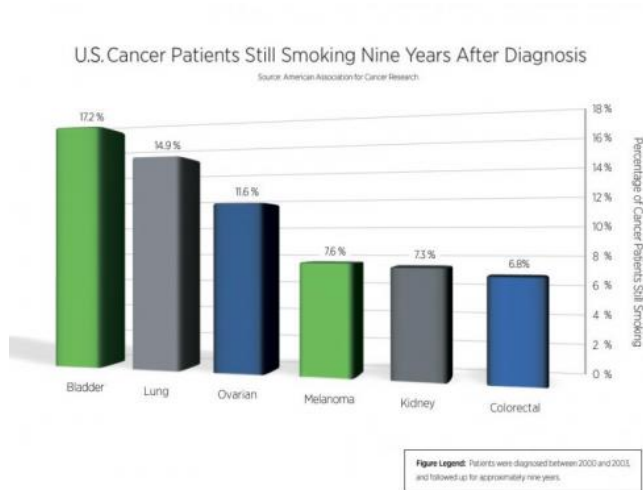


# Nearly ten percent of patients with cancer still smoke

6 August 2014



The graph shows the percentage of cancer patients still smoking by cancer type. Credit: American Association for Cancer Research

Nine years after diagnosis, 9.3 percent of U.S. cancer survivors were current smokers and 83 percent of these individuals were daily smokers who averaged 14.7 cigarettes per day, according to a report in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR).

"We need to follow up with cancer survivors long after their diagnoses to see whether they are still smoking and offer appropriate counseling, interventions, and possible medications to help them quit," said Lee Westmaas, PhD, director of tobacco research at the American Cancer Society (ACS) and lead author of the study.

Roy Herbst, MD, PhD, chief of medical oncology at Yale University and chair of the AACR Tobacco and Cancer Subcommittee, who was not involved with the study, said in an interview that the findings illustrate the scope of the problem.

"Smoking can cause new mutations among [cancer survivors](#) that can lead to secondary and additional primary cancers. It can also affect physical function and interfere with the efficacy of therapies," Herbst said. "We need to take note of this and target this population for intervention."

In the study, researchers at the ACS analyzed data on 2,938 patients nine years after their diagnoses.

Smoking prevalence by cancer type:

- bladder cancer (17.2 percent)
- lung cancer (14.9 percent)
- ovarian cancer (11.6 percent)
- melanoma (7.6 percent)
- kidney cancer (7.3 percent)
- colorectal cancer (6.8 percent)

Survivors were more likely to smoke if they were younger, had less education and income, or drank more alcohol.

About 40 percent of smokers said they planned to quit within the next month, but this intention was lower among survivors who were married, older, or smoked more.

"Smoking is addictive and having cancer does not guarantee that you will stop, even if that cancer was directly tied to your smoking," said Westmaas. "We need to do more to intervene with these patients."

**More information:** Prevalence and Correlates of Smoking and Cessation-Related Behavior among Survivors of Ten Cancers: Findings from a Nation-Wide Survey Nine Years after Diagnosis, *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev*, Published online Aug 6, 2014 doi: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-14-0046

Provided by American Association for Cancer

Research

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